

EOD Airmen on front lines



Clockwise from top: Team Leader Senior Airman Eric Benbrooks, 15th Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight, digs into a hole to make sure there aren't any buried or hidden improvised explosive devices. Airman Benbrooks mine sweeps the area of a mock post blast investigation on Base X for safety before he brings the rest of his team onto the site.

Senior Airman William Newman, 15th CES EOD flight, sets up the explosive train to clear out any unexploded ordnances. Airman Benbrooks signals his team that he deems the site clear and safe to complete the rest of the investigation with the team's assistance. Airman Newman builds the necessary wiring for the explosive train.

Hickam Explosive Ordnance Team practices in exercise

Photos and story by Kirsten Tacker
Kukini Photojournalist

The 15th Civil Engineering Squadron prepared specialized squads May 9 for the next rotation to go down range, by doing groundwork on Base X for exclusive explosive ordnance disposal training.

Senior Airmen Eric Benbrooks and William Newman and Airman 1st Class Michael Perkins, 15th CES, were tasked to go to a site using a Global Positioning System for a mock post blast investigation.

"We are trying to simulate Iraq or Afghanistan, where a Humvee got hit by a roadside bomb," said Master Sgt. Michael Pitts, 15th CES. "They're here to make sure the site is clear and open up that convoy route to allow more military to get where they need to go."

For training purposes it was assumed the area had a confirmed secure perimeter of 360-degrees from the Army before the

search and seizure of additional improvised explosive devices.

Sergeant Pitts provided the men coordinates and information to begin the post blast investigation.

"We had one killed in action, one wounded in action, and we already had patrol come in. The med-evac took them out," said Sergeant Pitts. "The other walking wounded left the area. We stayed off the route because we don't know what else is down there."

A 5-25 began inside the vehicle. The men looked five meters out their window to make sure there were no IED's or roadside bombs before they exited the vehicle. Then from outside the vehicle the men looked 25-meters out to make sure there were no booby traps.

On an actual site they send a TALON robot down first and have a reconnaissance of the area to make sure everything is clear before the team leader goes to the site.

"Airman Benbrooks is the team leader and the other guys are team members," said Sergeant Pitts. "We normally only have two, but we have the third one for training purposes. Team member Airman

Newman will be the robot driver and the Humvee driver if anybody has to go down to handle an item."

Initially if anyone goes down to handle an item, Airman Benbrooks goes by himself. This keeps his team members safe until the area is clear.

"If something ever goes off, we don't want anything to happen to them," said Sergeant Pitts. "The old school used to be the lowest ranking or youngest guy goes. It is all different now because the Army sends the most experienced and knowledgeable person down."

For this training Airmen Benbrooks is the most experienced, having been down range before. After Airmen Benbrooks swept the area he did a remote pull to move a board by a hole to make sure there was nothing else under it.

"They are using their gloves so if they get a component that has hair or fiber, we don't contaminate it," said Sergeant Pitts. "They don't have on the full bomb suit that weighs 64 pounds. They would if they suspect an item and couldn't get the robot down there."

Training was completed when the team blew up any remaining explosive items at

the site, to contain further damage.

Sergeant Pitts offered the team suggestions of things that could have been done differently once the training was complete.

"I would have parked the truck closer to the site and ran the wire out from the back of the truck," said Sergeant Pitts. "Instead of having to reposition the truck, forward think that you might have to blow something up down there. Always carry a camera and snap pictures of the area, because if the weapons intelligence team doesn't get it you can at least document what happened."

The mock post blast investigation wrapped with Sergeant Pitts explaining the importance of gathering and retrieving evidence by marking, flagging or simply retrieving the evidence and taking a picture.

"We don't want the enemy to have that tactical radio," concluded Sergeant Pitts. "They want those sensitive items back. The enemy wants the blinker assembly, because Iraqi's are taking them post blast and taping them to the side of their pick up trucks, so at night a suicide bomber looks like a humvee."

Crossword Puzzle: Air Force Cross Heroes

By Capt. Tony Wickman

71 Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

ACROSS

- 1. Afternoon beverage in London
- 4. Mil. lawyer
- 7. Air Force Cross recipient Lt Col Allan R. ____ (Vietnam)
- 11. Sphere
- 12. Warsaw ____, NATO antagonist until 1991
- 14. Mention
- 16. USN equivalent to AFB
- 17. Car
- 18. Spring or winter
- 19. Air Force Cross recipient SrA Jason D.__(OEF)
- 22. American ____
- 24. Roman garb
- 25. Air Force Cross recipient Maj Dean E. ____ (Vietnam)
- 29. Bombast
- 30. USA Medal of Honor recipient PFC David P. __ (Vietnam)
- 32. Commotion
- 33. Air Force Cross recipient Capt

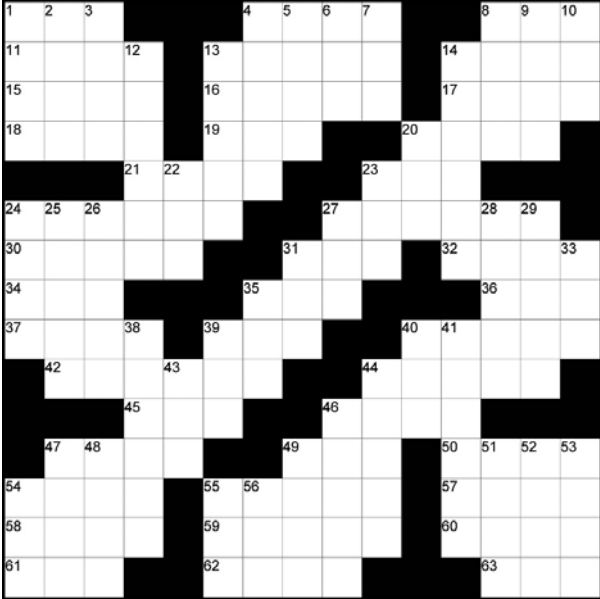
- William ____ (Gulf War)
- 36. Took cover
- 38. Air Force Cross recipient Col George E. __ (Vietnam)
- 39. 2005 movie “ ____ We There Yet?”
- 40. African antelope
- 42. Policeman, informally
- 45. Yank’s opponent
- 47. Air Force Cross recipient TSgt John __ (OEF)
- 51. Op or deco
- 52. ____ Raton, Fla.
- 54. Heap
- 55. Air Force Cross recipient Maj Robert S. __ (Vietnam)
- 58. Defy
- 60. Manuscript work
- 61. Air Force Cross recipient Lt Col Edwin L. __ (Vietnam)
- 64. Panda’s grub
- 67. Italian currency, once
- 68. ____ on; spur to action
- 71. Disconnected
- 72. Temper
- 73. Kwik-E-Mart owner
- 74. Celebrity
- 75. Shoe size

- 76. USN Medal of Honor recipient HC2 David R. __ (Vietnam)

DOWN

- 1. Heavy weight
- 2. Epoch
- 3. Flee
- 4. Bridge
- 5. Short excursion
- 6. Maneuvers
- 7. Culpability
- 8. Down Under country, in short
- 9. Tokyo once
- 10. Stimpny’s pal
- 13. South Pacific island
- 14. Burn residue
- 15. Guide
- 20. Radical
- 21. Cut
- 22. A Gershwin
- 23. Hall of Fame QB Marino
- 26. 2004 movie “Win a Date with ____ Hamilton!”
- 27. Oklahoma town
- 28. Air Force Cross recipient Col ____ A. Knight, Jr. (Vietnam)
- 31. 1949 Academy Award-nominated best picture “Twelve O’Clock

- ____”
- 34. Mistake
- 35. Hall of Fame Coach Ewbank
- 37. C.S.I. clue
- 41. Topmost
- 42. Taxi
- 43. Mining goal
- 44. School org.
- 46. Air Force Cross recipient Col John R. __ (Vietnam)
- 47. Gun
- 48. June, perhaps
- 49. Greatest boxer
- 50. Earn
- 53. Air Force Cross recipient Maj ____ B. Mitchell (Vietnam) and others
- 56. Work
- 57. British school
- 59. Creepy
- 62. Foot part
- 63. Evaluate
- 64. School transport
- 65. Picnic pest
- 66. Mil. Organization defending the US from ballistic missiles
- 69. Academic standard, in short
- 70. Air Force Cross recipient Col Theodore W. __ (Vietnam)



Memorial Theater 449-2239

AT THE MOVIES

CLOSED Monday and Tuesday

Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.

Ice Age 2: The Melt Down — The Ice Age is coming to an end, and the animals are delighting in the melting paradise that is their new world. Starring Ray Romano and John Leguizamo. Rated PG

Saturday and Thursday, 7 p.m.

Take the Lead — A former professional ballroom dancer volunteers at a New York public school to teach dance. Students clash with his methods, so he teams them up with to create a new dance. Starring Antonio Banderas and Rob Brown. PG-13

Sunday and Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Lucky Number Slevin — Set in New York City, a case of mistaken identity lands Slevin in the middle of a war being plotted by two of the city's most rival crime bosses: The Rabbi and The Boss. Starring Bruce Willis and Morgan Freeman. Rated R.



Above left: Mission Support Group 1 team makes different shots from around the basketball court to advance to the dunking booth during the amazing race held at Bellows Air Station Monday. Team Hickam commanders, first sergeants and chiefs participated in the event filled with various obstacles and challenges to help build comraderie and team work.
Above center: The 352nd Information Operations Squadron race for the finish line at Bellows amazing race after being pulled by Jet Skis.
Above right: First Lt. Luis Gonzalez, Pacific Air Forces, speeds through the tires.

Hickam members compete in amazing race

Photos and story by Kirsten Tacker
Kukini Photojournalist

Officers and non-commissioned officers battled against the clock during Monday's amazing race at Bellows Air Station.

The mission, should they choose to accept it, was to complete the twelve-station obstacle course in the fastest time.

In one hour, 19 minutes, snagging third place was the Pacific Air Forces, who aptly referred to themselves as the maniacs. In 1:16, slipping into second place was Mission Support Group 3 and the winners MSG 2, proudly rolled in with a time of 1:13.

"The amazing race is a team event that focuses on team building," said Joshua Dial, marketing director. "It is like 'The Amazing Race' on television. To go to each obstacle they have to pass the one prior."

All dressed in black donning dark shades at the briefing, Mr. Dial introduced himself as Agent J.D.

"Why are we here?" asked Mr. Dial in his special agent voice. "It is a day off from work, I know. This is the ultimate team-building event."

This was certainly an innovative way to rid anyone agonizing from a case of the Monday morning blues.

"We have water events, events in the woods, tennis courts, basketball courts, all different types of events dealing with physical fitness," said Mr. Dial. "There are agents located at each station."

The first heat, Wing 1 and MSG 1 exited the briefing.

The race team leaders for each group huffed and puffed from racing to each station, while they read instructions out loud to their teammates.

On the dunking machine Lt. Col. Stephen Turner, 65th Airlift Squadron, a member of the Ops group, got the dunk for his team super fast.

In another water event each team member had to get in the water, swim to a buoy and retrieve only one shrunken head for the whole team.

Some teams excelled in certain events, where others struggled and some teammates were not swimmers.

"We struggled with the metal ring toss, it kept hitting and bouncing off," said Lt. Col Laura Berry, 352nd Information Operations Squadron. "We actually were ahead of the red team (PACAF) until that point."

For the red team, "The easiest part was when the van drove us," said 2nd Lt. Joseph Erskine, PACAF.

Each station had an inspired name. The paint ball station was called mission impossible. Catch me if you can was the balloon toss. Balloons were shot through the air with a sling and the participants caught the water balloons in laundry baskets at five different distances.

Tech. Sgt. Robert Wooderson, Det. 1 MSG, developed the names of each station, along with the design for each obstacle in the race.

"A year and a half ago I wanted to do something nice for the cops," said Sergeant Wooderson. "I actually created this event, but we didn't call it the amazing race. We just

called it a PT fun day, kind of like a going away for our commander."

Capt. David Talafuse, Det. 1 MSG, told Sergeant Wooderson another event was coming up and the commanders wanted to do something fun for Col. Bill Changose's (15th Airlift Wing commander) last year.

"I told him about this event and Captain Talafuse said go ahead and start putting something together," said Sergeant Wooderson. "This is the first time ever we've done something like this. I think it went pretty well, a couple of hic-cups here and there. Honestly, you see all the people smiling and giggling."

It took Sergeant Wooderson about three months to come up with all the diverse tasks and switched the obstacle route about five times before it was finalized all the way to the finish line on the beach.

Crossing the finish line, participants shared their compliments with the volunteers who clocked each group's time.

"Very well organized," said Colonel Berry, who competed in the Honolulu triathlon the day before the amazing race, along with Major John Fiske, 15th Operations Support Squadron and Lt. Col Steven Franklin, 15th OSS.

"I have a new found respect for the show on television 'The Amazing Race'," said Master Sgt. Larry Johnson, 352nd IOS.

"What a great time!" concluded Col. Scott Chesnut, 15th Airlift Wing vice commander. "What an amazing race all the way around, this was truly a team Hickam event."



Above from left to right: Maj. Greg Gillinger, 352nd Information Operations Squadron, tippy taps through the tire obstacle course to retrieve an item to carry back while maneuvering through an intricate and slippery obstacle. Master Sgt. Dean Wajda, 1st Lt. Christian Paasch and Maj. Henry Myers, 15th MXG, struggle to get a balloon to fly through the air after several tries of balloons exploding on the sling. Obstacle three, catch me if you can, Lt. Col. Dan Wuchenich, 15th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, catches the last slung balloon for the maintenance group to advance to their next obstacle. Maintenance Group and Operations Group explode out of the briefing room to their first event of the day.

Below: The third place winners of team PACAF "maniacs" on obstacle nine race off to find their shrunken head hanging on the bouy.

